

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11

PA-01 SS-15 NSC-05 HA-05 /073 W

-----029721 231653Z /50

R 231420Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1783

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION USUN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BUDAPEST 2531

USUN FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O.11652: NA

TAGS: PINT SCUL SHUM HU US

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR., TO HUNGARY

REF: USUN 2368 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. VISIT BY DR. KING TO HUNGARY WAS GIVEN GREAT DEAL OF PUBLICITY IN HUNGARIAN MEDIA AND HAS GIVEN STRONG IMPETUS TO CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARIAN AND AMERICAN CHURCHES. DR. KING, WHO PREACHED IN CHURCHES OF FOUR DIFFERENT PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS WHILE HERE, WAS GIVEN WIDE EXPOSURE TO HUNGARIAN CHURCHGOERS. END SUMMARY.

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2. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR., VISITED HUNGARY JUNE 15-22. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS SISTER, DAUGHTER, GRAND-DAUGHTER, AND DR. SANDOR HARASZTI, A BILLY GRAHAM ADVISER AND PERMANENT MEMBER OF HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN U.S. DR. KING WAS INVITED JOINTLY BY THE HUNGARIAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, WHOSE PRESIDENT IS REFORMED BISHOP TIBOR BARTHA, AND SANDOR PALOTAY,

PRESIDENT OF HUNGARIAN COUNCIL OF FREE CHURCHES.
EVENTS IN WHICH DR. KING PARTICIPATED WERE
ATTENDED THROUGHOUT BY LEADERS OF EACH OF HUNGARIAN CHURCHES,
INCLUDING A NUMBER OF PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC BISHOPS.

3. EARLY STOP BY DR. KING WAS AT STATE OFFICE OF
CHURCH AFFAIRS WHERE HE WAS RECEIVED BY CHAIRMAN IMRE
MIKLOS. DR. KING TOLD MIKLOS HE HAD BEEN URGED TO
VISIT HUNGARY BY PRESIDENT CARTER, BILLY GRAHAM, AND
AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG. MIKLOS AND DR. KING STRESSED
MUTUAL NEED TO PROMOTE PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
HUNGARY AND U.S. MIKLOS BRIEFED DR. KING ON CHURCH-
STATE RELATIONS IN HUNGARY.

4. ON JUNE 15, DR. KING WAS GUEST OF PEOPLE'S
PATRIOTIC FRONT, WHERE HE TACTFULLY FIELDDED A NUMBER
OF QUESTIONS BY PROMINENT CHURCH AND LAY-LEADERS ON
SOCIAL AND RACIAL INJUSTICE IN U.S. IN THIS AND
OTHER MEETINGS DR. KING GENERALLY STRESSED NEED FOR
SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE, NON-VIOLENCE, GREATER
EFFORTS TOWARD PEACE AND END TO OPPRESSION IN ALL
COUNTRIES.

5. DR. KING WAS ACCORDED HONORARY DOCTOR'S DEGREE AT
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN DEBRECEN JUNE 16.
HE ALSO UNVEILED A STATUE OF HIS SON AT CEREMONIES
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IN FRONT OF ONE OF DEBRECEN'S REFORMED CHURCHES AFTER
DELIVERING A BRIEF RELIGIOUS MESSAGE THERE. ON JUNE
18 AND 19 DR. KING VISITED THE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY IN BUDAPEST AND ALSO GAVE SERMONS AT A
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST, A BAPTIST, AND A LUTHERAN
CHURCH. THE LATTER IS ONE OF BUDAPEST'S LARGEST PRO-
TESTANT CHURCHES WITH A CAPACITY OF ABOUT 2,000. ALL
CHURCHES WERE FILLED TO CAPACITY. DR. KING'S MOST
VIGOROUS PRESENTATION WAS AT BAPTIST CHURCH. IT WAS
BASED ON PARABLE OF LOST SHEEP AND STRESSED CHRISTIAN
OBLIGATION TO SEARCH OUT THE SINNERS AND BRING THEM
INTO THE FOLD. WHEREVER HE SPOKE DR. KING ALSO
AFFIRMED THE BROTHERHOOD OF ALL MANKIND. HE FRE-
QUENTLY SPOKE OF HIS FORGIVENESS OF ASSASSINS WHO HAD
TAKEN LIFE OF HIS SON AND HIS WIFE.

6. JUNE 19 DR KING WAS RECEIVED AT THE NATIONAL PEACE
COUNCIL, WHERE HE WAS GIVEN THE COUNCIL'S HIGHEST MEDAL
IN RECOGNITION OF HIS LONG STRUGGLE FOR FRIENDSHIP
BETWEEN NATIONS AND AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. DR.
HARASZTI WAS ALSO HONORED WITH A PLAQUE FOR PROMOTING
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND HUNGARY.

IN THE EVENING BOTH MEN WERE GIVEN A SMALL DINNER,
ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF DR. KING'S FAMILY, AND BY
JANOS BEREZ, HEAD OF THE FOREIGN POLICY DEPARTMENT OF
THE HSWP CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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7. DR. KING'S DAUGHTER, MRS. FARRIS, AS WELL AS HIS
SISTER AND GRANDAUGHTER, ATTENDED MOST EVENTS AND
MRS. FARRIS FREQUENTLY MADE TOASTS AND SPEECHES WHICH
WERE WELL RECEIVED BY HER AUDIENCE -- GENERALLY ECHOING
THEMES HER FATHER VOICED.

8. EMBASSY POLOFF GREETED KING PARTY ON ARRIVAL AND
REMAINED IN LIAISON WITH GROUP THROUGHOUT THEIR
STAY. HE ALSO ATTENDED, AS AMBASSADOR'S REPRESENTATIVE,
PRESENTATION OF HONORARY DOCTORATE TO DR. KING IN
DEBRECEN. AMBASSADOR RETURNED FROM CHIEFS OF MISSION
CONFERENCE IN LONDON JUNE 20, AND RECEIVED KING FAMILY
FOR PRIVATE MEETING THAT EVENING. THE NEXT DAY HE
HOSTED A LARGE AND SUCCESSFUL RECEPTION ATTENDED BY

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LARGE NUMBER HUNGARIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS, OFFICIALS, PRESS AND CULTURE FIGURES, THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INCLUDING CZECH, POLISH CHIEFS OF MISSION, AND AMERICAN EMBASSY COLLEAGUES.

9. PUBLICITY IN ALL THREE PAPERS WAS GIVEN ON FOUR DAYS OF VISIT. ELECTRONIC MEDIA ALSO CARRIED REPORTS. MEDIA FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO MARTYDOM OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. THEY ALSO CREDITED DR. KING SR. WITH MAJOR EFFORT IN SUPPORT OF PEACE, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL EQUALITY. COVERAGE WAS FAVORABLE TO DR. KING AND, TO EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO GIVE DISTORTED REPORTS OF RACIAL OR SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN U.S.

10. DR. KING TOLD REPORTING OFFICER HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE DEGREE OF UNITY AMONG THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN HUNGARY. HE ATTRIBUTED IT TO NECESSITY FOR BANDING TOGETHER TO PROPAGATE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS. HE RECOGNIZED VITALITY OF HALF-DOZEN CHURCHES HE VISITED AND PRAISED HOSPITALITY OF ALL HUNGARIANS WHOM HE MET. HE MADE A POINT OF SAYING AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION WAS ONE OF HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS VISIT. DR. KING AND HIS PARTY LEFT HUNGARY JUNE 22, AND PROCEEDED TO PRAGUE TO ATTEND THE FIFTH WORLD CHRISTIAN PEACE CONFERENCE.

11. COMMENT: MORE DOORS WERE OPEN TO DR. KING THAN WERE OPENED LAST YEAR TO BILLY GRAHAM. DR. KING RECEIVED GREATER PUBLICITY AND GREATER PERSONAL ACCESS TO HUNGARIAN CHURCHGOERS ALTHOUGH HIS CROWDS WERE SMALLER THAN BILLY GRAHAM'S. BESIDES PROMOTING GOOD WILL ON A DIRECT PERSONAL LEVEL, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES DR. KING'S VISIT WILL EASE THE WAY FOR FURTHER RELIGIOUS

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EXCHANGES AND CONTACTS BETWEEN HUNGARIAN AND AMERICAN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.
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Message Attributes

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